

# Five Ways To Wellbeing

Wellbeing is when you feel good about yourself and your life. People with higher levels of wellbeing live longer and healthier lives, recover more quickly from illness, do better in school, college and the workplace and are more resilient in hard times.

Research shows there are five ways that can really help to boost our wellbeing.

- Connect
- Be active
- Take notice
- Keep learning
- Give



## What are the Five Ways?

The way we feel and function in our day-to-day lives is not just down to our genes, up-bringing, or our life circumstances. Our personal outlook on life and the activities we do account for about a 40% variation in our wellbeing.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing is a set of actions that are proven to enhance wellbeing. They are the wellbeing equivalent of 'five fruit and veg a day'. Taking one of these five invitations to action can really help to protect and improve our wellbeing.

Choosing to change our approach to life in a small way can make a difference to how we feel. Often when we change something, it leads to something else, and then something else until we look back and realise a significant journey of change.



## Connect

...with family, friends, your community.

There is strong evidence that good relationships with family, friends and the wider community are important for our wellbeing. Feeling close to people, and being valued by them, helps us to function well in the world. Research suggests that the health benefits of strong social relationships have a similar magnitude to those of quitting smoking.



Building strong social connections in our lives can really increase our feelings of happiness, confidence and self-worth.

**One small step can make the difference!**

## More ideas for connecting

- Dedicate time to your relationships like you would a work meeting or homework – set times and dates and stick to them.
- Don't just rely on social media – arrange a face-to-face catch up with a friend.
- Call a friend you haven't spoken to for a while.
- Switch off the TV tonight and play a game with your family, or just talk.
- Put a few minutes aside to find out how someone really is.
- Speak to someone new today.
- Take the plunge, join a group or club!



## Be active

...go for a walk or a run, join a club, find a new activity.

Go for a walk or run. Cycle, play a game, try gardening or dancing; exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity you enjoy and that suits your level of mobility and fitness.

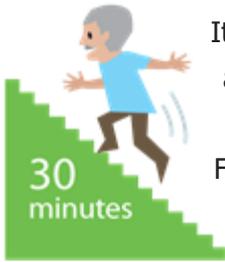
Most of us know that keeping fit and active is good for our physical health, but it's also really good for our mental wellbeing. It can protect us against depression and can help to improve mood, sleep patterns and feelings of anxiety. Being active can also help to increase our self-esteem, self-control and our ability to rise to a challenge.

Being active doesn't need to be too intense for you to feel good – there's evidence that low impact physical activities such as stretching, toning and resistance exercises can be effective in promoting psychological wellbeing. You just need to find a physical activity that you can enjoy and fit into your daily life.



**One small step can make the difference!**

## Just 30 minutes!



It's recommended that adults do 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on at least 5 days of every week.

For children and young people it's 60 minutes every day.

Try breaking this up into shorter 10 or 15 minute sessions.



## More ideas to be active

- Take a walk at lunch time or after school.
- Put on your favourite song and dance.
- Get off the bus one stop earlier than usual and walk.
- While you're gardening, also practice being in 'the moment'.
- Borrow a dog and go for a walk.
- Park the car a bit further from work and walk.

## Take notice

...of the world around you, explore your local area, go out for lunch with friends.

Be curious. Catch sight of the beautiful. Remark on the unusual. Notice the changing seasons. Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, school or college, taking time to eat lunch, or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.



Are you rushing through life, without taking the time to notice things around you? Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present can improve our mental wellbeing and that paying attention to 'the moment' can help us to think about the things that are important to us.

Being in 'the moment' means noticing smells, sounds, sights and tastes, as well as the feelings and thoughts that occur from one instant to the next. This is also known as 'mindfulness'.

**One small step can make the difference!**

## More ideas on taking notice

- Go for a walk or sit in the garden or a park. Turn off your phone for a while – take time to look around, listen, and enjoy the sounds of nature.
- Start to relish and pay attention to a routine activity that you usually hurry through.
- When you are out and about today, stop and look at things that you normally whizz by.
- Listen to some music you love, think about how it makes you feel and what you love about it.
- Think of 3 things you are grateful for right now.
- Eat slowly and enjoy the taste of each mouthful of food.
- Try a different (but safe) route to work or school.
- Take a photo of something interesting or beautiful each day for a week.



## Keep learning

...find a course, learn to play an instrument, set a challenge.

Rediscover an old interest. Sign up for that course. Take on a different responsibility at work. Fix a bike. Learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy achieving. Learning new things will make you more confident as well as being fun.



Learning can boost our life satisfaction, self-confidence, self-esteem and optimism. It can also give us a sense of purpose, help us connect with others and keep our brains active and exercised.

**One small step can make the difference!**

## More ideas for learning

- Read a poem each day this week.
- Visit a gallery and learn about an artist that interests you.
- Make a scrapbook of something you are really interested in.
- Be brave, push yourself out of your comfort zone and try something new.
- Learn one positive thing from a challenging or difficult situation that will help you in the future.



- Rediscover an old hobby that challenges you.
- Take up a new challenge and keep going with it for at least 6 weeks.
- Take up an opportunity for work experience in an area that interests you.

## Give

...a smile, a hug, some time to help someone.

Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and creates connections with the people around you.



There is good evidence that committing acts of kindness, big or small, random or planned can give us a sense of purpose and make us feel happier and more satisfied about life. In older people it also has the added benefit of acting as a preventative agent against cognitive decline.

**One step can make the difference!**

## More ideas on giving

- Be kind to someone you pass in the street this week who is having difficulty with something.
- Offer your seat to someone.
- Cook a meal for a friend or neighbour.
- Hug someone who looks like they need a hug.
- Be there for a friend in need.
- Consider if you have time to volunteer, doing something you love.
- Tidy your room before you are asked or make someone a cup of tea.